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Inflammation of the liver, and every affection of this organ, have been considered peculiar to warm climates.

This opinion, which to a certain extent is correct, more particularly as it regards acute hepatitis, is now received with considerable limitations; and it seems to be generally admitted, that though the liver, in cold and temperate climates, is seldom the subject of acute inflammation, it is by no means exempt from that form of the disease termed chronic, ~~that it constitutes~~ on the contrary when thus affected, the primary seat of many distressing and hitherto unmanageable diseases. — Indeed a late writer upon diseases of the liver, goes so far as to declare his belief, that the prevalence of this form of —

the complaint is such, as to constitute the chief seat of most of those ailments unattended by febrile action, and to venture to affirm, that the grand source of health and disease, is connected with the natural or disordered functions ^{of the liver}, and that every chronic, or lingering illness, arises in a considerable degree, from some defect there.

From a priori reasoning, it would seem unaccountable, that an organ so complex, and so intimately connected with the primary functions of the system, should in any climate enjoy an exemption from disease — and from the reflections I have bestowed upon the subject, am induced to believe, that it is much more frequently diseased than is commonly supposed — and that many of those lingering and distressing affections, apparently situated in other structures, derive their existence from a disease

ed condition of the liver.

One principal reason I suspect, that diseases of this organ have been ~~frequently~~ overlooked, arises from this last mentioned circumstance - which indeed renders diseases of the liver peculiar, and different from those of most other parts. - Holding the closest sympathy, with all the important organs of the body, and possessing itself, comparatively little sensibility, its diseases are not discovered, until by their secondary consequences, other parts of the system become implicated, and the practitioner and the patient, are deceived by the symptoms arising from a part only sympathetically affected.

Inflammation of the liver is usually divided into acute and chronic.

The first is generally ushered in by pyrexia, soon followed by a pungent, or sometimes a dull pain in the right side, short

ing to the shoulder, or under the sternum.
producing cough and difficult respiration. The
pulse is strong hard and frequent. There is
nausea and sickness, often with a vomiting
of matter resembling bile - great watchful-
ness, and sometimes delirium, a difficulty
of lying on except on the affected side, and some-
times the patient is unable to lie on either
side. About the region of the liver there is
usually some tenderness, and the pain is always
increased by pressure. The bowels are gene-
rally costive, and the skin after the disease
has continued for some time, frequently becomes
of a deep yellow colour. These last however
do not invariably attend, as the bile some-
times finds its way into the intestine and
passes off by stool.

A difference in the symptoms it has
generally been observed obtains, when differ-
ent surfaces of the liver are affected, thus

when the superior convex surface is the seat of the disease, there is rough, difficult respiration, and more acute pain; and nausea and vomiting, and other signs of gastric distress, when the lower surface is the seat of the inflammation.

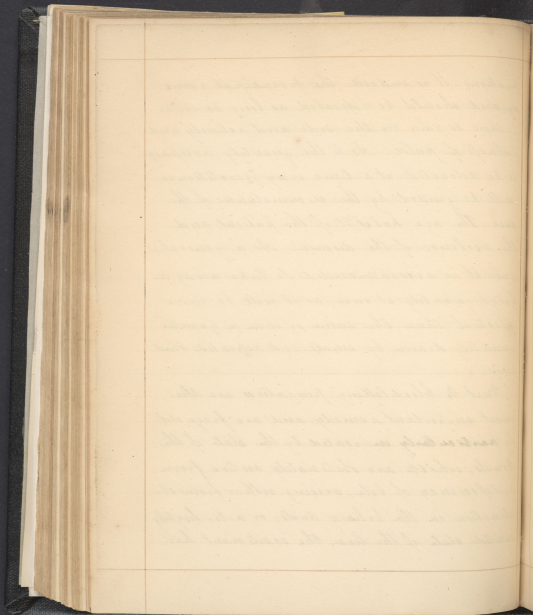
The causes of hepatitis are stated by Dr Pullen to be, "external violence from contusions or falls, and especially those which have occasioned a fracture of the cranium - certain passions of the mind - violent summer heats - violent exercise - intermittent and remittent fevers - cold applied externally and internally - various solid concretions, or collections of liquid matter in the substance of the liver, produced by unknown causes. Last by the acute is often induced by a chronic inflammation of this viscus. But the most frequent cause of this disease is an exposure to a cold night

air, after very hot weather, or the intemperate use of ardent spirits. The internal organs by the action of these stimuli being debilitated and relaxed, are unable to transmit the blood thus suddenly thrown upon them by external cold, and congestion and inflammation follow. The liver especially from such a state of things is liable to suffer, owing to its great vascularity and tardy circulation.

Acute inflammation of this organ, is said to be rapid in its progress, and to run in a few days into suppuration, unless arrested by timely and appropriate means. The practice must therefore be decisive and energetic. The antiphlogistic plan of treatment, in all its parts, is to be strictly enforced, and venesection in particular must be pushed to a greater extent than is justifiable in most other inflam.

mations. It is indeed the principal remedy, and should be repeated as long as there is pain in the side, and activity and fulness of pulse. As to the quantity necessary to be detracted at a time every practitioner will be guided by the circumstances of the case. The age habit &c of the patient, and the violence of the disease. As a general rule it is recommended to take away a large quantity at once, as it will be more effectual than the same or even a greater quantity drawn by small and repeated bleedings.

Next to blood-letting purgatives are the most important remedy, and are frequently particularly indicated by the state of the bowels, which are obstinately constipated from a deficiency of bile, arising either from obstruction in the biliary ducts, or a too highly excited state of the liver, the excitement has.



ing transcended the point beyond which a gland is incapable of excretion. Besides carrying off the foul accumulations of the intestines, they tend to emulge the biliary ducts and lessen the general excitement.

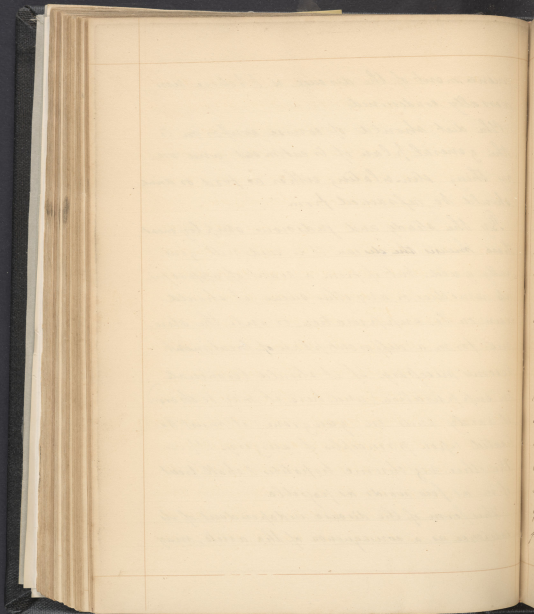
After having by these means somewhat reduced the febrile excitement, we should resort to the mild diaphoretics, and local remedies, as cups, leeches and particularly blisters, which should be applied over the region of the liver, and repeated if necessary. Finally if these remedies should fail to produce the desired effect, it is recommended to resort to a course of mercury. With respect to the use of this medicine in acute hepatitis, it appears to be agreed by the writers on the subject, that it should never be resorted to as a salivator, while there is much excitement in the system, and the practice at one time of carrying it at the com-

menacement of the disease, is I believe universally condemned.

The diet should of course conform to the general plan of treatment, and one thing stimulating, either as food or drink should be refrained from.

By the steady and judicious employment these incisions the disease it is said will generally yield; but if from a want of appropriate remedies, or any other cause, it should run on to suppuration, or into the chronic form a different plan of treatment becomes necessary. If it should terminate in suppuration (and here it may be observed it rarely ends in gangrene) it must be treated upon principles of surgery. Upon the other viz chronic hepatitis I shall treat of in a few words as possible.

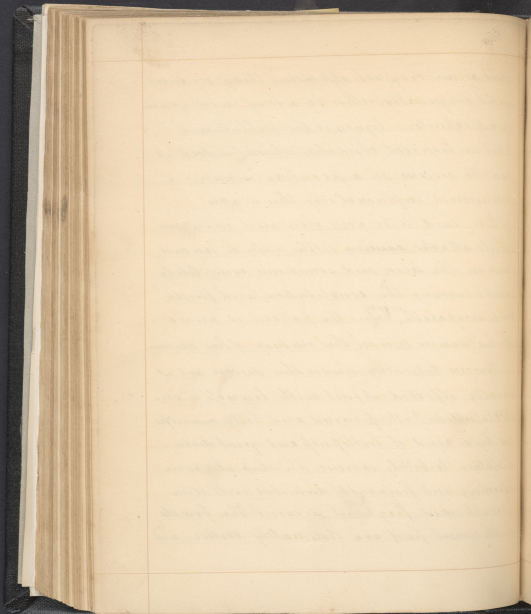
This form of the disease independent of its existence as a consequence of the acute, may



exist as an original affection. being induced most frequently, either by a long intemperate use of spiritous liquors, or the influence of heat in tropical climates, which indeed appears to exercise in a peculiar manner a pernicious influence over this organ.

It is said to be very slow and insidious in its attacks, causing little pain or tenderness in the liver, and sometimes completely undermining the constitution, and producing insupportable ^{injury} before the patient is aware of his danger, or even the nature of his disease.

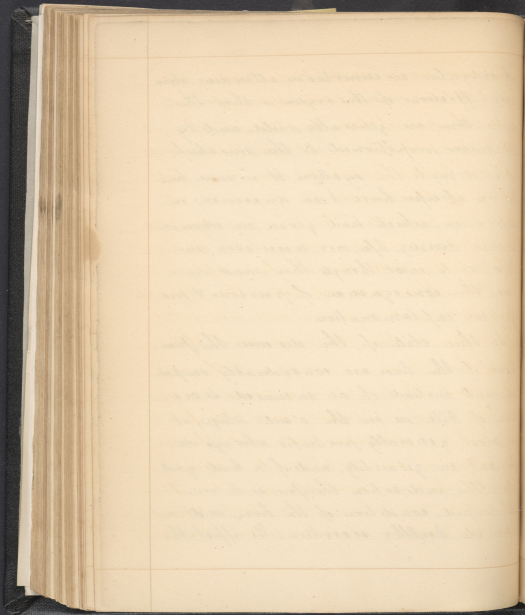
Persons labouring under this disease are generally affected at first with loss of spirits, flatulence, both of mind and body, manifested by a kind of listlessness, and great disinclination to bodily exercise. The sleep also is unrefreshing, and frequently disturbed with disagreeable and frightful dreams. The bowels for the most part are habitually constipated, and



the feces when voided come away with great difficulty, exhibiting an unnatural odour and colour, generally a dark muddy or clayey appearance. When the disease has continued for some time, emaciation takes place, often with oedema of the lower extremities, and the patient has altogether an unhealthy sallow appearance. If he be examined more, his liver will often be found enlarged and indurated, and the patient himself from any sudden motion will sometimes be sensible of a dead weight, or a sensation of pulling down in the right side. The process of digestion is always imperfectly performed, and if the disease be permitted to run its course the patient is at length enervated by a gradual wasting of the system, or as is frequently the case he is destroyed by its terminating in dropsy.

A singular circumstance attending chronic affections of this organ is, that the symptoms are generally mild, and by no means proportioned to the mischief it is doing to the system. It is now hepatic abscesses have been discovered on dissection, which had given no inconvenience during life, nor were even suspected to exist, though they must have been the consequence of previous & progressive inflammation.

In this state of the disease the functions of the liver are considerably impaired, and instead of an increased secretion of bile as in the acute stage, it is most generally perhaps always deficient in quantity, and of a bad quality. The indication therefore is to remove the torpid condition of the liver, and restore its healthy secretion - To effect this



mercury under careful proper restrictions
is I believe universally recommended.

In the cure of liver complaints this article has acquired great reputation, and at one time was used in every form and stage of the disease, in quantities almost incredible. That this practice, even in warm countries, where it is said the system will support the exposure of mercury, much better than in colder ones, has proved injurious and even fatal to many, we have the evidence of those who have been eye witnesses to the practice, and who taught by experience, recommended a very different course. The liver is then in a debilitated state, and the indication of cure is to apply a stimulus which shall overcome this condition, should the stimulus employed make too strong an impression it will defeat its own

object, and the disease will be either pur-
sued on to the suppurative stage, or the
debility will be still farther confirmed
by the exhaustion which always follows a
state of over excitation. In many instan-
ces it is said this has actually taken place
and the death of the patient which has
been attributed to the insupportable nature
of the disease, has been produced by the
injudicious administration of this power-
ful remedy.

In the treatment of chronic hepatitis
then I would introduce mercury gradu-
ally into the system, and endeavour to
make a gentle but continued impression
on the diseased gland until its powers
were destroyed, aiding the mercury by
the employment of other remedies at the
same time. The use of purgatives will
be also lately necessary, as the bowels

remain obstinately costive, being deprived of their natural and accustomed stimulus the bile, which is always either so diminished or vitiated as to be inadequate to the performance of its functions. They are also useful by imparting a stimulus to the liver, thus cooperating with the mercury in arousing it from its debilitated and torpid condition. As external means, the occasional use of the warm bath, frictions and a succession of blisters over the region of the liver are recommended. When the liver is very much enlarged Thomas in his Practice states, "that he has derived decided benefit from a plaster of ammonia cum spread largely over the diseased surface, so as to act medicinally, as well as on the principle of a bandage in giving some support."

Even in this form of the disease the use of mercury has some limitations. Indeed it ap-

seems to be a mercurial invasion either to a
very excited, or debilitated and cachectic state
of the system; and accordingly in those cases
of diseased liver when the system is greatly
debilitated and the gland very much altered
in structure, or when it is accompanied with
a scrophulous diathesis, mercury is said to be
injurious. In such cases, particularly when
a scrophulous disposition exists, the nitric acid
on account of its deobstruent and tonic
powers appears to be well adapted. Other
remedies as the dandelion, extract of esculent &c
have been recommended, and under particu-
lar circumstances might answer a good
purpose. The first was highly thought of
by Dr Rush.

The diet best adapted for persons labour-
ing under chronic hepatic, is such as is
stimulant, nutritive, and easy of digestion: a

nothing salted meats and greasy substances. By degrees it may be improved by the addition of broths, light animal food &c until health is perfectly restored. He who labours under obstructed liver, and hopes to prolong his existence, must abandon what are called the pleasures of the table, and observe a rigid temperance with respect to diet. If wine is drunk it ought to be diluted with water; but in most cases this last alone will be the best beverage. Malt liquors will seldom agree, and spirituous ones ought to be shunned as poison. Late hours and night air ought to be cautiously avoided."

